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VOLUME I

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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NUMBER 1

TEACHING LITERATURE FOR A FULLER EXPERIENCE

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This article is a discussion of the teaching of literature in the elementary school. It is not at all concerned with the teaching of "silent reading" or study—the mastery of reading as a tool, which includes the understanding of texts, the use of indexes and of the reference library, and the like. All this is essential; but its necessary procedure is so different from that of enjoying real literature that confusion of the two often badly obscures and confuses both teacher and pupil.

I suggest, first, that the chief purpose of teaching literature is not, as is usually assumed, the appreciation of books—of an author's style or construction and development of plot, of the imagery in poetry or the nuances of prose. It happens that whatever is worth while of this will come naturally enough in a proper teaching of literature, but generally as an incidental or by-product of the primary purpose.

And what is that? It is best stated by Professor Franklin Bobbitt¹ as the enriching of our own experiences, the widening and

deepening of our contacts with every aspect of life. The child who reads Kipling and Mark Twain, Bre'r Rabbit tales and Robin Hood stories, Riley and Lewis Carroll, has his fancy limbered and freed and his view upon things made more natural and clear. The sources of his happy laughter are stirred, if he does not begin too late, by Edward Lear and Hugh Lofting. Just so far as he enjoys books like these, moreover, he is likely to savor his own experiences more and to see better. He will certainly suffer less misery of apathy and misdirection of energy. He lives through literature a richer life, happier because it is filled and occupied.

To this real enjoyment of experience in literature, all preoccupation with matters of technique and style is a distinct hindrance. This concern is natural enough for grown persons who are already particularly interested in literature. For children, and for anyone, indeed, who has his eye on the main business of literature, these other matters are irrelevant and obstructive. Almost the entire mass of geographical,

¹Chapter 18, "Reading as a Leisure Occupation"—*The Curriculum*. Houghton-Mifflin, 1918.

historical, and scientific data which we teachers are inclined to wring out of literature, or pump into it, is a hindrance. Most dead facts of authors' biographies and the like are a hindrance; and in consequence most apparatus in texts on literature study has been an unmitigated nuisance. What we need to do is to help children find the books they like, and read them for the richest possible realization of the experiences the author has put in his book. Children will not get everything in really good stories; we don't get everything out of the best things we read. It is an excellent test of a fine book to see more than we had first discovered, when we go back to it again. Let children alone to find joy in books, and come back to them for more. Let us hurry less. There should be "reserved delights," as Professor Quiller-Couch has put it.

We must not interrupt children's enjoyment by irrelevant questions. When the messenger or the hero dashes through the postern gate on a life and death errand, stopping to define and explain about posterns is brutally keeping the gate shut. Like hero or messenger, we want to *get there*. When the loyal band creeps stealthily upon the savages, stopping to explain the herbage and to comment on the terse description of the quiet night is outrageous. The actual bad results of most "teaching" of literature are well developed throughout Dr. J. F. Hosis's *Empirical Studies in School Reading* (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921).

But all this has been merely negative. What *does* help children "sense" the experiences a book has to give them? We must, first of all, keep within the children's range of possible understanding. Almost every list aims too high. Hence has come the apt definition of a classic as "a pleasure unseasonably hurried into." We must find, from studies like Dr. Jordan's,¹ what children like, and if possible just what they like about it; then we must give them more

worthwhile books of like appeal. Here again we must not hurry too fast. Adventure, and good live adventure at that, is undoubtedly the first appeal to both boys and girls in the grades. Genuine humor and simple pictures of home and child-life probably come next, and we are lucky if we can find them unsentimentalized. Sentimental lyrics about flowers and birds have little or no appeal to children, common though they are in grade-school readers. Mr. Burgess succeeds in capturing children because he humanizes—he often falsifies—animal action and capitalizes adventure. So does Thompson-Seton. Our danger—perhaps the danger of women teachers and writers most of all—is sentiment in picking out for emphasis what is pretty and soft. We will do better to hold to the likings of sturdy boys. If they are not biased or shamed, most girls themselves like these very things best, as is suggested by the comparatively few votes for girls' books in Mr. Jordan's list.

In the second place, when children are actually reading, we want to help them *live* in the picturable, vivid action—in what they find in moving pictures, plus much of sound and color and other realities. We need to help children's imaginations, working with the simple experiences they have already had, to reconstruct these materials into new action and life. The child who is really helped by class discussions and pooling of experiences can take what he knows about boats and fish and fog, and what pictures, if nothing better, have given him of the ocean, and from these reconstruct a great moving story like *Captains Courageous*. In this way he can actually re-live a great deal more of it than we are first likely to credit. Whatever we can do to help him in the problem—not hindering but forwarding the action and real life of the story—is right and fine. Not altitudes and areas, facts and figures, but a quick picturing of the whole situation, not biography and other irrelevant data, but the life of the story, is the thing.

¹A. M. Jordan: *Children's Interests in Reading*. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921.

A beautiful illustration of the right sort of approach to literature is given in Mrs. Canfield Fisher's "*Understood Betsy*," where the child reads "The Staggit Eve" while her uncle mends harness and her aunt sews and they all have apples and popcorn. Much reading aloud with natural, spontaneous comments—reading by teacher and pupils who care for something and prepare it for the pleasure of the class—this is one of the truest ways to advancement in good appreciation of books. There should be much happy laughter in the literature class, much enjoyment of books, each pupil for himself, while the teacher advises. There should be much spontaneous, informal comment, filling in the gaps in each one's experience by the help of all, the class and the teacher. Great assistance is given here also by simple, unfinished dramatizations of stories which are really dramatic. Much is gained also by pupils' natural and spontaneous attempts to tell small stories out of their own experiences. There should be free and frequent giving of *promotive* book reports. These must be not the sort which kill all interest in a book by giving on demand, of all deadly and dispiriting things, a full summary of the story and a biography of the writer, but three or four sentences that tell us *what* the pupil likes in the book, and illustrate the point by samples from the story itself.

There is too much time spent on most "selections" read in the grades. I have repeatedly been asked by college students, "Is that all of Sir Launfal? It was much longer when we read it in seventh grade." Of course it was longer, with tedious details and analysis and questions. But, probably because of this very length of attention, I have rarely had a student who was able

to tell me the simple fact—which is the center and the point of the poem—that Sir Launfal never left his castle at all, that the whole experience was a dream.

Anything, then, that makes a story into moving, breathing reality for our pupils is good teaching of literature. Also, as suggested by the Sir Launfal incident, anything that helps toward the idea or center of a work of art is essential, too. This does not mean "pointing the moral." It means simply finding what the author was trying to do, whatever it was. If, as in most stories to be read in elementary schools, the author wanted only to tell a good story with pictures in its quick lines, when the pupils have the story we should say no more. If he wished rather to bring home some idea about human actions and motives and their results, as in Franklin's story of the Penny Whistle, we should help the pupils look for that. But there should be very little of this latter in the literature for the grades.

In substance, then, we should, recognizing and handling separately our various purposes in reading different sorts of material, set aside literature as a distinct province of enjoyment of experience, with no intrusion of facts and ideas in the effort to be improving. Then we must begin where children are, by finding what they like and giving them more excellent things in the same sort—but without haste to force them into adult enjoyments. And in our reading we must center on the story as a living dramatic action and see what the author was showing us in it. If we can resolutely do these necessary things, we may have some hope of more general enjoyment and happy enrichment of pupils' experience through literature.

STAGE CRAFT FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER*

GEORGE STYLES

Department of Expenditures, Detroit Public Schools

The term "stage-craft" may sound somewhat strange to many elementary school teachers, but nevertheless there are times in the conducting of even the most elementary of school programs in this day and age when a knowledge of stage craft is called for from some member of the school faculty.

Most modern schools in our larger cities are provided with some form of stage, if not a fairly well laid out auditorium, but all buildings are not modern, and almost every teacher can remember some time when he has had to wrack his brains to decide where and how he could produce the school concert or small children's play, and, even with a place to produce the play, how the staging could be handled.

Assuming that a play is to be produced in a school building, the first thing to secure is a clear space large enough to accommodate the number of pupils taking part. If there is no elevated platform, the audience must suffer some inconvenience, unless the local carpenter can loan some small saw horses and a few planks to erect a temporary structure. One end of the classroom can usually be cleared between the front row of seats and the wall by removing the teacher's desk and chairs which are portable furniture.

Should the school boast an assembly room larger than the regular classrooms, this will be the best room to use. If the room is furnished with movable desks, the problem is quite simple, as these have only to be removed and chairs substituted in the space to be used as the auditorium. This applies also to the regular classroom when furnished with movable desks.

*Plays discussed in this article: "Muffins" and "The Pig Prince" in *Three to Make Ready* by Louise A. Garnett, George Doran.

A more difficult problem is faced when the room is furnished with fixed desks screwed to the floor. A great deal depends upon the spacing of the desks, and the type. A classroom seated with desks with tip-up seats and wide aisles between may be converted by placing folding chairs in the aisles in line with the regular seats. This, of course, is far from an ideal layout, and may clash with the rulings of the local fire department, if the capacity of the room is raised to a state of overcrowding, and is therefore not recommended. The above method would only apply to a case when a slightly larger number of pupils are to be accommodated than the room will ordinarily seat.

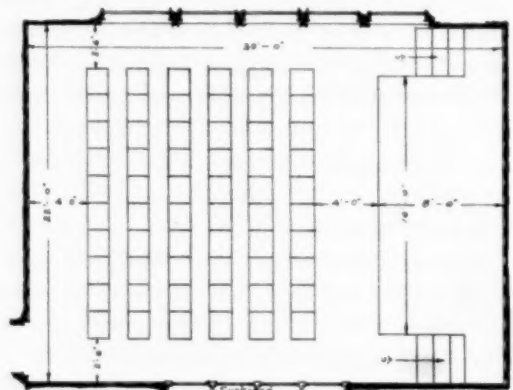


Figure 1

It will be obvious that the only way to secure effective seating in a classroom furnished with fixed desks is to have the janitor remove the seats (no great task, and accomplished with a screwdriver) and reseat the room with folding chairs, leaving the aisles between rows to give adequate space to clear the room in the shortest possible time. The aisles should be so arranged that they lead to the doors for exits. The

illustration, Fig. 1, shows a method of laying out seats in a room 22' x 30'.

The seats, if not already in the school building, can usually be borrowed or rented from a church, institute, or club, or the number of chairs required may be gleaned from the other rooms in the school building. Money raised by a production may be well spent in purchasing some folding chairs. Almost any school equipment company can supply them, and when not in use they may be stored in a very small space.

In the illustration, Fig. 1, of floor plan, there is a space of 4 feet between the front row of seats and the apron of the stage platform. This is the space usually occupied in a regular theater or hall by the orchestra pit. It serves to remove the audience from the stage, to allow a wider angle of vision, and makes unnecessary the discomfort of looking up to the stage. This space is valuable for the use of a piano or orchestra.

Space, stage platform, and seats obtained, the next thing is to consider the furnishing of the stage. The first thought is usually to obtain a curtain to close the stage from the audience, for the curtain is a great convenience, if available.

For situations such as those discussed in this article, the play will naturally be selected to suit as nearly as possible the conditions under which it will be presented. There are playwrights who have written prologues to their plays, which describe the scenery *which should be represented* on the stage, and candidly request the audience to use imagination. *The Pig Prince*, by Louise Ayres Garnett, is an example. No one need despair because he has not the facilities of an opera house. As much as the front curtain is appreciated, it is quite possible to present a production without it. In place of the curtain, it is possible to use screens. These may be placed along the front of the platform until the time for the curtain to rise, and then be removed. An effective method is to have two characters dressed as pages remove the screens

and then retire until the screens are needed again.

Another great problem is that of making a background for the play. There should be something to cover the walls, which are usually divided into sections by blackboard or cupboard doors. This, it will readily be admitted, is far from ideal, but there are times when even these objectionable features may be turned to account, as will be shown further along in the discussion.

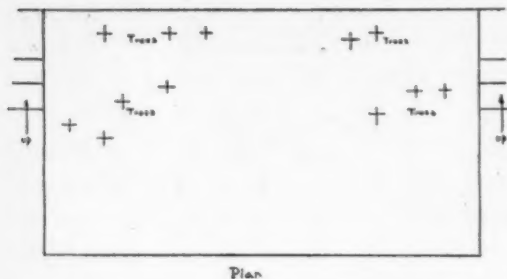
To describe the different forms of backgrounds for all types of plays is obviously impossible in this article. A few general types will be given as suggestions.

A Christmas play usually calls for a background which suggests an exterior or landscape. How will the teacher produce this, with the handicaps before mentioned? The first thing to consider is the state of the existing background, which in most cases will be the classroom wall, with blackboard, cabinet or closet door occupying some parts of the space. These being the principal objections, how shall they be concealed? The larger and stronger boys may collect a quantity of various sized pine trees, shrubs, and branches. Some of these should be of sufficient height to cover the objectionable features. Stand the trees in bases, or use any method to hold the trees upright, and arrange them as a background.

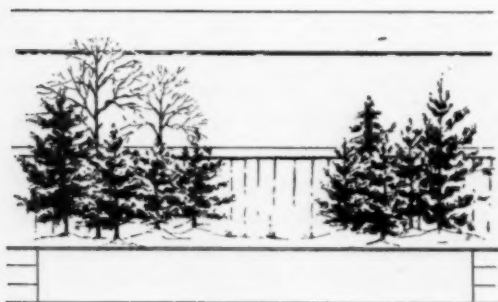
Many landscape arrangements are possible with the same group of trees and branches. One simple method of concealing the tree stands is to cover them with leaves, but a far better method is to secure sheets of some cheap material (brown or green) and cut holes through which to pass the trunks of the trees. The trees may then be set into the bases underneath, and the cloth ruffled to give the appearance of earth or leaves. Pieces of matting or carpet painted or dyed green may be distributed to represent grass plats. For a snow scene, sprinkle with heavy frost powder and asbestos fibre. Avoid paper, or any other inflammable material, as cotton batting. Avoid the play which calls for a

large Christmas tree fully decorated with lighted candles.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 represent a platform decorated with small pine trees and large branches of other trees. Figure 2 is a plan of the platform, the crosses indicating the location of the trees, which gives an idea of the arrangement for entrances and exits.



Plan



Elevation

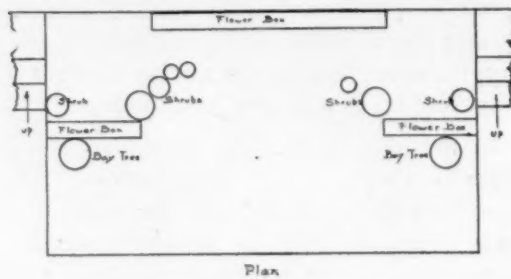
Figures 2 and 3

Figure 3 is the front view of the setting, showing the placing of various sized trees, and also showing the blackboard utilized as a fence, a transformation easily made by the use of colored chalks, ordinary kalsomine colors or show card colors. These colors may be washed off when the setting is to be dispensed with. The colors should be selected to harmonize with the wooden rail at the top of the blackboard, in order that it will become part of the scheme.

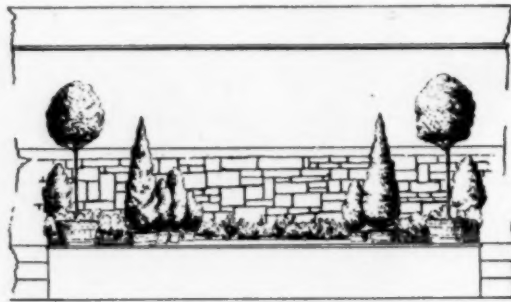
At Hallowe'en there are many entertainments to be staged. These are comparatively easy to stage, as the cornstalks and Jack-O-Lanterns associated with this time are usually available, but beware of the cardboard Jack-O-Lanterns with lighted candles in-

side. They are a fire hazard. For illuminating small properties, use a low-voltage electric lamp; or a pocket flash lamp or Christmas tree lamps.

Many operettas and children's plays are *about* or are directly associated with flowers or flower gardens, and require a garden background. Interesting effects may be



Plan



Elevation

Figures 4 and 5

produced with shrubs and flowers in pots or in boxes procured from the local florist. By arranging these, hedgerows and flower beds may be represented. A sheet of blue material stretched over the wall will give a perfectly good sky to back the whole scene, although this is not absolutely necessary.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 represent the same platform decorated for a garden scene, made up entirely of plants and shrubs. The plan, Figure 4, shows a method of distribution, and Figure 5 the front view. The blackboard is again brought into service, this time to represent a stone wall. Some very effective settings may be made up of flowers and shrubs if the colored blooms are placed judiciously. A small

fountain stand or bird bath, and a garden bench or two would complete this setting.

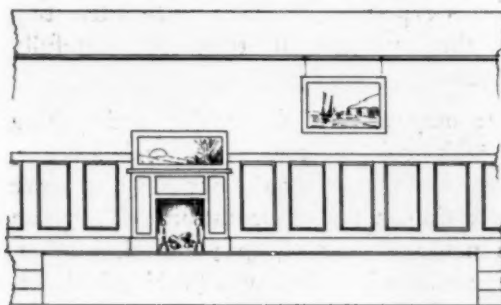
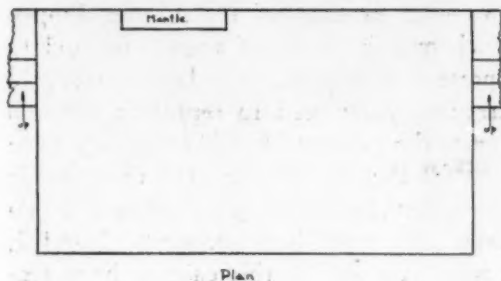
Other plays may require an interior scene. Many of these can be successfully rendered with screens, and it is even possible to use the objectionable cupboard door to advantage. Some very successful screens have been made from wood panelling taken from

the setting depends upon the furniture.

The foregoing suggestions for backgrounds all tend toward the realistic, whereas a great many plays may be successfully produced with a purely decorative background, and perhaps are the best for children's plays, as they assist in retaining the unreal or fairy story atmosphere.

Simplicity should be the keynote in these backgrounds, but it will surprise the person unused to this type of work how difficult it is to keep such things simple. Quite simple backgrounds may be devised from a few curtains and panels, from screens, or many other things which may be pressed into service, such as pieces of beaver board, Chinese lanterns, painted flower pots, etc.

The scene plot for *The Pig Prince*, a children's play by Louise Ayres Garnett, calls for a setting which represents the King's garden and the Royal Model Pig-Sty. The stage is divided by a hedge which separates the two locations. Figures 8 and 9 show a method of developing a setting for this play. Figure 8, the plan of the platform, shows the location of the different parts, each part being marked. The screen at the back of the Royal Pig-Sty is to cover the entrance of the pig characters representing the pigs, and serves to conceal them during any "off stage" play. This screen should be braced to prevent its being knocked over during a rush entrance into the pen. The gate and railings forming the pen may be constructed of lumber and beaver board, painted. The coat of arms may be cut from a piece of beaver board or heavy cardboard. The hedge is composed of a few potted shrubs. The bench and other furniture may be borrowed or rented from some local furniture store, or some old chairs may be painted up for the occasion. The steps at the back center and the boxes on each side may be packing cases painted. These and the tall shrubs are merely to add interest to the general ensemble, to break up the straight lines. This may be simplified or elaborated upon as the producer wishes. The object in selecting this play for illustration is to show a method of

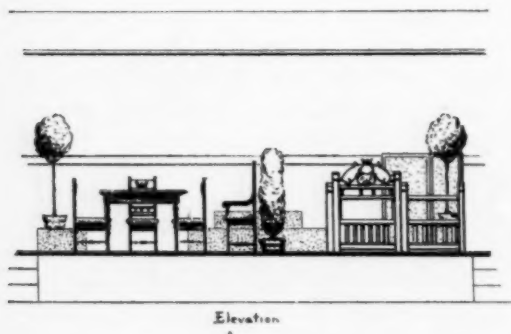
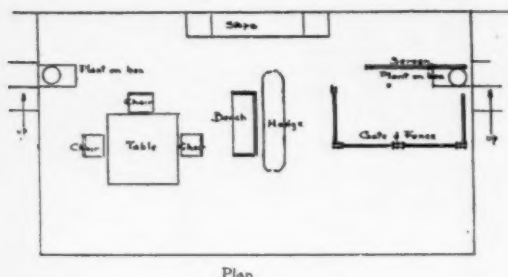


Elevation
Figures 6 and 7

old buildings. This, in conjunction with an old wooden over mantel, produced a remarkably fine effect. The panelling was used upon a platform, with a door in the back wall. The screens were set on each side of the door, and the door used as an entrance for the actors. The mantel was set along the wall, with a grate in the opening, a few knick-knacks on the shelf, pictures on the wall, a fender before the grate, tables and chairs, with a fernery and lamp, completed the effect.

Figures 6 and 7 show a method of developing an interior scene with a small amount of construction. The mantel on the back wall is the only piece to be built. In this scene the blackboard is chalked or painted to represent wood panelled wainscot. The rest of

handling a difficult type of setting, known as a "split set;" meaning one divided *up* and *down stage* and representing two locations. Further elaborations to this setting may be a heraldic design in the background, or the rear wall may be partly covered by standing upright posts along the back edge of the platform and from these hanging



Figures 8 and 9

multi-colored streamers and banners.

The color scheme for all these suggestions will be tempered to suit the costuming of the players.

Another illustration for a play upon nothing but an open platform is *Muffins*, by the same author. Remember there is a platform—uninteresting walls and no front curtain. The play *Muffins* calls first for characters to walk before the curtain, address the audience, and pass off on the other side. Then the curtain is raised, disclosing a scene representing the outside of the Muffin shop. A few lines are recited, and the curtains separate to reveal the Muffin shop interior. This

is quite a simple matter to arrange on a regularly appointed stage, but to secure anything at all effective under the aforementioned handicap needs some consideration. One method of introducing the characters would be to have them enter and walk along in front of the stage and then up onto the stage proper to discover Scene Two—the exterior of the Muffin shop—which may be made of screens painted to represent the shop. A large three-fold screen may be used to represent the two scenes; the two outside folds painted on the back for the exterior, and the three inside folds painted to represent the interior. To make the change between scenes 2 and 3, it would be well in this case to have two boys or girls dressed in costume, who open the side screens, set them in place, and then carry on the necessary furniture. Changes of this type may be made quite interesting to the audience if they are carefully handled.

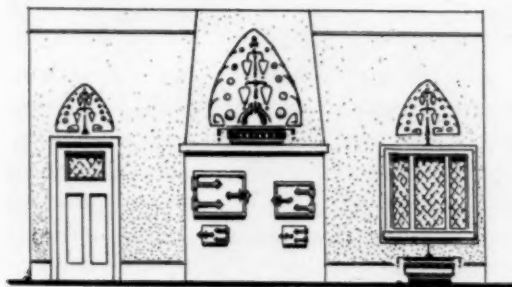
It may seem a formidable undertaking to make suitable screens for such a scene, but remember, they do not have to serve more than a few presentations. They can be made of any cheap material, lumber, beaver board, and canvas (unbleached cotton) painted with ordinary kalsomine colors made of dry pigment and glue-size water, or they may even be colored with colored chalks, colored paper cut to shapes required and stuck on with glue or paste, or even colored rags stuck or sewed to the screens.

Figure 10 shows the three-fold screen closed, with the back painted to represent the exterior of the Muffin shop. To add to the set, an upright standard with the shop sign mounted upon it might be used, and this balanced with a street sign and a few shrubs so placed that they are clear of the wings of the screen when it is opened.

Figure 11 illustrates the same screen opened, showing the interior of the screens to represent the inside of the shop. The door and window may be practical, i.e., the door constructed to open on hinges and the

window cut out of the canvas that one may see through it. They may then be used by the characters. If paper or rags are used, it will be wise to secure material which has been flame proofed.

*Rags may be flame proofed with a solution which may be purchased from stage hardware companies or scenic artist supply



Figures 10 and 11

houses. If it is not possible to procure the solution, a solution of alum and water will make things fairly safe. A few trials of different strength solutions will determine the quantities to be used. This, it must be understood, will not make the materials "fire proof" but only flame proof, i.e., it will only smoulder when held in a flame.

While dealing with the subject of fire hazard, it will not be out of place to mention a few don't's.

*It is possible to purchase colored papers which are flame proofed especially for Christmas and other decorations.

Do not allow some amateur electrician to run extra lights for service on a temporary stage, or for that matter on any stage. An experienced electrician should always be called in, as he will know how to run the wires to keep within the requirements of the safety departments, at the same time safeguarding property and lives. And when extra lights are available for use, do not discover that red or some other colored light is required for the satisfactory production of the play and attempt to obtain this color light by covering the bulbs with colored paper or other inflammable material. If colored light is required, purchase the bulbs already colored from some electrical store, or take your bulbs to some local theater and have the lamps colored with lamp dip. The above methods will be perfectly safe and give the best results.

Don't drape the lamps with branches of dried leaves to produce a more interesting effect for the fall play. Beware of the lighted candle. If no other lights are available, it is usually possible to switch off the units at the back of the room and leave those burning nearest the stage. The school stereopticon may sometimes be used to assist the general illuminating of the stage, but it is better to have too little light on the first production, and later have some permanent fixtures installed, rather than create a fire hazard.

Imagination, ingenuity, and willingness to work are requisite to successful stage craft.

The sketches should assist in some measure to illustrate the methods considered in the above article.

Later articles will consider the more advanced form of school play production, and it may be a revelation to see how many times the same material may be used to secure different results.

SILENT READING IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES†

G. T. BUSWELL

University of Chicago

In this paper the writer has three major aims: first, to show that silent reading is in no sense a temporary educational fad, but rather is simply a natural solution to an educational problem which has been developing for nearly a century; second, to explain as clearly as possible just what is implied by the term silent reading; and third, to call attention to one of the most essential points wherein the silent and oral reading processes differ.

If one questions why silent reading is now being so greatly emphasized, the answer comes in terms of certain natural developments. In a recent number of the *Elementary School Journal*,* Dr. Judd has presented some very interesting facts which illustrate this point. He takes figures from the census report to show that the number of issues of newspapers and periodicals published per year has increased in the following manner:

1860	9	hundred	million	copies
1870	15	"	"	"
1880	20	"	"	"
1890	46	"	"	"
1900	78	"	"	"
1910	100	"	"	"

While the increase in population in the United States has been considerable, it in no sense keeps pace with this remarkable increase in material to be read. The fact is that the average amount of reading done by the average person has enormously increased. In 1910 there were 18,000 different newspapers and periodicals printed in America, with the regular circulation of

a number of them exceeding a million copies. This increase in material to be read has been a perfectly normal development. An increased amount of silent reading is in no sense a temporary fad. Rather, there is every reason to believe that the amount of material to be read will continue to increase. The bearing of these facts upon the problem of the school should be plain.

It has been repeatedly shown that silent reading is more rapid than oral reading. The slower oral reading process satisfied very well when there was only a small amount of material to be read. Fifty years ago the small amount of available reading matter could be covered even with a crude and slow process. The rapid development of more material to be read has produced a natural demand on the school for a better technique of reading. The answer of the school has been a change from oral to silent reading. Only by training in a silent reading process can the school hope to meet the demand of society for more effective reading habits. Nothing could be more natural and less a fad than silent reading. It is a product of natural causes.

This argument for increased training in silent reading can be supported by other considerations. While oral reading has certain important and legitimate uses, which the writer has no wish to deny, these uses make up a portion of one's total reading which is much less than was the case fifty years ago. Reading to an audience, whether that audience be one person or a thousand, is a desirable art; but the amount of time that the average individual spends in this manner is small as compared with the time

†Read before the National Council of Teachers of English, November, 1923.

*Charles H. Judd, *Relation of School Expansion to Reading*. *Elementary School Journal*, XXIII, Pp. 253-266, 1922.

consumed by silent reading. The greatest social need should receive the greatest proportion of school emphasis.

Even in the school itself, as well as in society, the greater demand is for silent reading. If the elementary grades are to prepare the pupil for the heavy reading demands of the high school, it must give them a technique of silent reading which will function effectively and rapidly by the time the pupil reaches his junior high school period. It is not the function of the high school but rather the function of the grades to give this technique.

To sum up the preceding paragraphs, it is the writer's view that the process of silent reading is the school's only solution for society's demand for an ability to participate in a wider and wider reading experience. The school must either turn society back to a man of a single book or provide an improved reading method which will enable society to deal with an ever-increasing number of books.

As stated in the introductory paragraph, the second aim of this paper is to explain as clearly as possible the nature of silent reading. It should be emphasized that silent reading is more than just noiseless reading. It involves the direct translation of visual impressions into meanings without the intervention of oral pronunciation. It emphasizes not saying the words, but getting the thought. It relieves the reader of all but the barest essentials of the process of thought getting. It removes the temptation to conceive of reading as pronouncing words rather than as grasping thought. Furthermore, it emphasizes the grasping of large thought units in place of detailed analyses of small expressional units. It aims to provide the pupil with the ability to deal with an entire story in a single period, rather than to put his attention upon individual lines and sentences of the story. Silent reading is a process of rapid fusion of words into large units of thought wherein the reader's attention may never take note of the isolated words as such.

This matter of fusion may be illustrated by such a sentence as the following: "The boy lives just over the hill." In reading this silently, one is aware of the rapid perception of an idea. This idea is not made up of the sum of *the + boy + lives + just + over + the + hill*. Indeed, the reader may be entirely unaware of the fact that the word "the" occurs twice in the sentence. These words arranged in this order have a meaning quite apart from their meaning taken separately. In silent reading the reader is urged to look only for these total meanings. In oral reading the common emphasis is placed on the isolated words in the sentence. For example, if the pupil omits or mispronounces the word "the", he would most likely have this fact called directly to his attention. His consciousness is thus diverted from thought to pronunciation. This type of diversion may be entirely legitimate for certain purposes. But it should be clearly understood that such a practice is not compatible with the conception of reading as a process of thought getting. The danger of this type of diversion of the purpose of reading is far greater in oral than in silent reading.

In the very beginning stages of reading, the oral process is very convenient and serves some useful purposes. With the aid of some phonic analysis, the pupil is given the advantage of the large stock of words, the meaning of which he knows when he hears them, but not from their printed symbols. Phonetic analysis is a useful instrument in reading, *provided* that the teacher knows when its purpose has been served. But after the pupil has made his first beginnings in the reading process, he can very easily be taught to eliminate the vocal pronunciation and then grasp the thought directly. This gives him greater freedom in reading, allows him greater liberty in pursuing his interests, and makes the initial development of a process which will eventually become one of his most useful abilities. Oral reading serves as a temporary aid in this initiation of the silent reading process. When this

stage is passed, silent reading should predominate. It will then serve better in the great majority of occasions when reading is required. Oral reading will be given some additional development also to meet the smaller number of occasions when it is desirable.

It is hoped that the reader of this article will not confuse oral reading as it is taught in the schools with the teaching of expression as an art. The writer conceives of these two aspects of oral reading in the same way in which he conceives of teaching children to sing. It seems desirable that practically all children be given a rudimentary training in learning to sing. Very few will develop this ability to the level of a real artist. Neither society nor the school has looked with favor upon the expenditure of a large amount of energy to develop the majority of pupils to a high level in musical production. Society does not care to listen to mediocre singing. It does, however, prize highly the ability to appreciate real music. Expression of the type that will attract and hold an audience is as remote from the oral reading of the schools as the clear tone of the opera star is from the nasal twang of the amateur. To argue for oral reading on this basis carries little weight. The stronger argument is for silent reading, which will enable the reader to participate in a larger reading experience and to enjoy thoroughly what is read.

The third aim of the writer is to emphasize an essential point in the teaching of silent reading—a point in which the silent and oral processes differ most radically. This point may be stated briefly by saying that oral reading is essentially an analytical process, while silent reading is essentially a process of synthesis. The analytical character of oral reading is evidenced by the short assignments, the repeated reading of the same paragraphs, the large number of detailed questions which fill out the reading period, and the most common practice of calling attention to the details of pronunciation, omission or repetition of words, and other similar details. The outcome of this process of detailed analysis is necessarily a

very slow rate of progress and a small amount of material covered. Until recently it was common practice to read one book per year in the elementary school. In far too many cases this practice still persists. It is impossible to move rapidly with a method which demands detailed analysis of each sentence and paragraph. The common practice with this method has been to "study" the reading before the class period, "studying" in this case meaning to read the lesson over as many times as possible in the time provided. This practice in itself is sufficient to destroy all interest in the thought of the material read. Nevertheless, after this period of "study" the method continues by having the assignment re-read piecemeal at a rate which makes it impossible to grasp any continuous thought in the story. Day after day this continues. By the end of the year a book may be finished—a book which would be read by a class of corresponding maturity taught by a silent reading method in probably three weeks' time. The writer lived through five years of this in his school experience. Not until he reached the sixth grade did he have the courage to attempt to read silently for his own enjoyment an entire book. And one will not have to go far to find this same procedure of teaching oral reading still in use. In fact, the writer has seen this same procedure enacted in a Chicago public school not half a dozen blocks from where he works. The enthusiast for oral reading may insist that this is not the way he would teach it. The answer seems to be sufficient that the public school has had a century to develop a better method of oral reading and has not done so. Would it not seem feasible at least to experiment with another method of doing it?

As a substitute for this deadening process of oral analysis it is now proposed to use a method which will make possible rapid procedure and a wide reading experience. The advocates of silent reading cheerfully agree to exchange for some of the "perfect mastery" of each sentence by oral reading the

vital interest in the material read, which comes when the method of reading can more nearly keep pace with the thought of the reader. Little loss is felt from the exchange of a detailed analysis of a group of stories about "Tar Babies" and "Three Bears" for a broad reading experience with a dozen books, some of which may deal with the experiences of people in the world in which the child actually lives.

An example of the possibilities of silent reading may be drawn from the reading report of a third grade teacher in the Rockford, Illinois, schools. In this third grade, containing 43 pupils, the average number of books read by each member of the class was fifteen, eight of which were read silently at home and seven during the regular reading period at school. The experience gained by this class is out of all proportion in value, as compared with that gained by an oral reading class covering one or possibly two books in a year.

It is at this particular point that the teaching of silent reading encounters the chief difficulty. Teachers who have been trained by an oral reading method are loath to give up the analytical technique which has characterized that type of reading. They try to carry over into silent reading all the elaborate forms of analysis and questioning which have been common in oral reading. They are not content to let a pupil sit down with an interesting book and learn to read silently by much practice; they must make work of it by interrupting him with questions and tests at frequent intervals. The proper functioning of silent reading requires an abundant reading experience with the most informal type of report or class discussion. To talk

about stories in class, as one would do it outside of class, is the desired end. To stimulate an interest in the thought of what is read, and to cultivate extensive reading habits is the most useful outcome.

One might state this issue of analytical versus extensive reading habits more satisfactorily in terms of activities of the primary and intermediate grades. In the primary grades, the chief aim of silent reading is to develop habits of rapid and effective reading of large amounts of interesting and simple narrative material, which will stimulate not only the child's imagination but also his constructive thinking. By all means he should have enough reading to make it easy, and to lead him to discover the enjoyment of it. In the intermediate grades, the type of reading material needs to be more varied. Reading for enjoyment must then be supplemented by training in a more careful type of reading, which will prepare for the various types of study required in the pupil's later school experience. Part of this reading will become analytical, but analytical from the standpoint of thought rather than from words. The pupil must learn how to read rapidly when reading a newspaper, and how to read carefully when reading his arithmetic problems. In both cases the process will be silent, and the attention will go to the thought, rather than to the words as such.

Silent reading should deliver the child from the one-book habit. It should give him wide reading interests. It is only by giving specific training and practice in this type of reading that the child will be able to meet the excessive reading demands imposed by society.

THE CREATION OF DR. DOLITTLE BY HUGH LOFTING

C. C. CERTAIN

Detroit Public Schools

Hugh Lofting is an American by adoption, but when the great war broke out in 1914, he returned with his family to England and enlisted. His family remained in England, while he went into the front line trenches. The letters which he wrote home to his little son and little daughter became a joy both to him and to them. Of the drab horror around him, he had no inclination to tell them, and furthermore news from the battle front, at all definite, would not have been allowed by the censors.

He desired to keep up a correspondence with his family and very naturally chose to draw upon sources of fiction rather than fact. Dame Fancy could be much more lovely to the little ones than Dame Gossip. So Hugh Lofting wrote daughter Elizabeth and son Colin what good Dame Fancy had to say in and around the trenches. And it was this good dame who began talking to Hugh Lofting about the animals at the front.

It was a noble service they were giving, fighting as bravely as human soldiers in the mortal combat. They suffered keenly, these animals, both mentally and physically. Their mental trials did not escape the attention of Hugh Lofting, and his observations gave him a clearer insight into their lives. Their physical sufferings, cruel and ghastly at times, provoked his deepest sympathy. He saw what sensitive creatures these animals *really were*. They understood very well what was happening and seemed to appreciate how much depended upon them. They knew their part in the general scheme of things. Even the gaunt old mule behaved much as the human soldiers did. When a shell came whining its message of death or grim torture from the distance, the mule at the first sound lifted his ears tensely, straight up, drew taut the muscles of his

body, braced himself all fours for the deadly impact, breathlessly ready for destruction. And then when the shell hit beyond him, or before him out of reach, when he had heard the explosion and felt the earth jar and quiver, he would shake himself, and pull himself together, and drop his ears as if to say—

"Well—at least I'm still here and safe until the next time." And off he would step, by the same tokens saying, "I must keep at it, too, while I last. There is much expected of me."

Concerning matters such as these man and beast spoke but one language. At times terrible forebodings were told in the glancing light of their eyes. Suffering and sympathy brought them into mutual understanding. Hugh Lofting's letters in a literary way covered this intelligence to his children back home.

There were casualties, too, casualties of every description among the animals, casualties bringing death as among the men, or worse, maimed broken bodies. But there was one great difference between the experiences of man and beast. Medical science, of course, exhausted all resources to save a wounded man, however badly impaired or mutilated his body. Miraculous restorations to life and physical well being were made.

But there was an open question in Hugh Lofting's mind concerning the treatment of wounded animals. Too often the speechless horse or mule or dog or pigeon, wounded even slightly, though inconveniently wounded, had to face destruction—death from his companions in arms—from the men with whom he was fighting and for whom. It seemed crude that science utilized the same means to ease the pain of a wounded, suffering animal as it did to

destroy an enemy. Somehow this did not seem exactly right.

Case after case came under the observation of Hugh Lofting. He began more and more impartially to make comparisons and to follow the destinies of the dumb heroes at the front.

There was a mare, a veteran of scores of battles. She was with the first units that went into action at the beginning of the War. By some chance, as did some of the men, she escaped death repeatedly to fight on heroically; always at the front gaining in the effectiveness with which she rendered service and in the shrewdness with which she struggled against the odds of war for survival.

The men who had gone overseas in those first units, those who survived, wore a star as an award of distinction and merit. And on the head band of her bridle the mare wore the star awarded her. This star she carried proudly with her along her unflinching way through all of the fighting.

One night a German airman flying above the British lines, in the flare of the rocket that he let fall, discovered a large number of horses corralled in a secluded place. The horses were huddled closely together in a small area. After circling a time or two, the airman spilled a whole tray of deadly shells down upon them. Many of the horses were, of course, instantly killed; but many were only wounded. A few escaped unscratched. These were separated from the wounded. Then at intervals from the darkness came the flash and detonation of

rifle or pistol as the wounded animals were shot.

The mare was among these and died in this pathetic way—not mortally wounded in the air raid; but disabled for service with the odds of delays and inconvenience to the outfit against her. When fighting was resumed at day break she was not there to carry on. To some who knew her story, the manner of her death seemed cruel and ignominious.



It was these sordid experiences that formed the background of Hugh Lofting's letters home to the children. And it was across this shadowy background that the character of Dr. Dolittle began to move, and finally to emerge an immortal.

*Courtesy of The Detroit Free Press.

POETRY IN THE SCHOOL ROOM

The Interpreter's House

CLARA BEVERLEY

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To present a poem adequately the teacher must heartily appreciate both its ideas and the harmony and beauty of the language in which the ideas are expressed. He must be able to act as an interpreter, penetrated by the poem and forgetting himself in his endeavor to convey to his hearers the message of the poet.

Preceding the adequate oral rendering of the entire poem by the teacher should come just enough stimulation to arouse expectation and interest on the part of pupils. This is usually accomplished through the recall of suitable personal experiences. With adults the name of the poem itself is generally a sufficient stimulus.

In the following record of a lesson on Longfellow's "Arsenal at Springfield," note the questions which have for their purpose the arousing of expectation.

THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD (B Class, Eighth Grade)

T. Have you ever seen a great collection of war weapons?

P. When the war was over I saw a big collection down town.

P. I saw a big collection at the Art Museum.

T. Have you ever seen a military procession or heard military music?

P. In New York, after the war, the 27th division had a parade.

P. In 1921, at West Point Military Academy, I saw the soldiers drilling.

P. In Massachusetts, in the High School, they drill.

T. How many have heard military music?

P. A bugle call.

P. There are lots of victrola records.

T. Do you know the names of any pieces?

P. "The Soldier Chorus" from "Faust."

T. Do you know what an arsenal is?

P. Where they keep powder, ammunition.

P. Cannons, guns.

T. The poet Longfellow once visited the United States Arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. Afterwards he wrote a poem telling how he felt and what he thought as he stood there looking at the great guns. Let me read the poem:

THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD†

This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death-angel touches those swift keys!
What loud lament and dismal Miserere
Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,
In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,
Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's song,
And loud, amid the universal clamor,
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace
Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis
Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's skin;

The tumult of each sacked and burning village;
The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;
The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;
The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,
The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

†From Houghton Mifflin edition of Longfellow's poems.

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
And every nation, that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear forever more the curse of Cain!

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

T. What do you think of it?

P. I think it's quite an accurate description of how countries go to war.

P. I think it is very true.

T. What do you mean by *true*?

P. Well, famine.

T. What about famine?

P. If we didn't have war we wouldn't have famine.

P. I think these cannon destroy the work of God.

P. I think it (the poem) thrills you.

P. I think it brings out the personality of the arsenal as like a person.

P. I don't quite understand the poem. Does it mean to explain the things used in war?

(A mimeographed copy of the poem was passed to each pupil.)

T. Read the part you don't understand.

P. I don't understand that first part "From floor to ceiling, Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms:"

T. Have you ever seen big guns? Do you get the picture of the arsenal?

P. I think those guns are piled from floor to ceiling.

P. I've seen a lot of armories—I've seen the guns standing and they look like the pipes of an organ.

P. I think in this poem, they're silent pipes, and while he's in here he thinks back to the wars of the different ages—the Saxons

and how they fought—the Tartars—the Aztecs and how they fought—and he thinks all these things while he's standing there. If the money was spent on other things it would be better for the world.

T. Is there anything else you do not understand?

P. I don't understand where he says—(reads):

"The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,

The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder
The diapason of the cannonade." (Pupil stumbled over word *diapason*—teacher pronounced it.)

T. Let us read what comes before:

"I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,

In long reverberations reach our own."
(The teacher reads again the succeeding stanzas through "the diapason of the cannonade.")

T. It goes back to "I hear." He heard these things in his imagination.

P. I think that when he went to the arsenal and had seen all these weapons, he saw what the power of weapons can do.

P. I think he sees the fate of nations by looking at these weapons.

P. I think when he says:

"Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,

And jarrest the celestial harmonies,"
he means the birds. There are no birds on the battlefield.

T. Does he mean only birds?

P. I think all nature is affected—men, women are killed.

P. I think he means—that, well like if it was celestial, a priest—they say priest's celestial robes.

T. *Celestial* means *heavenly*.

P. During the war they had no trees; the flowers and grass were all trampled down.

T. Well what else does it mean? It goes beyond the material things. (reads)

"Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly
voices,

And jarrest the celestial harmonies?"

P. The bells—the church bells—

P. War destroys all the cathedrals—
They don't think of this on the battlefield,
but just of killing each other.

P. Friendly—

T. Yes, friendly feeling is all crushed out.

T. Is there anything else you would like
to understand better?

P. I don't understand that fourth stanza,
(reads):

"On helm and harness rings the Saxon
hammer,

Through Cimbric forest roars the Norse-
man's song,

And loud, amid the universal clamor,
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong."

P. I think he was talking about the
different generations, how the Saxons fought
and the Norsemen.

T. Yes, and the Florentines and the
Aztecs:

"I hear the Florentine, who from his palace,
Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis
Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's
skin."

T. What made Longfellow write this
poem?

P. He was thinking of the things that
made so much war.

P. He was thinking about the World War.

T. O, this poem was written long before
the World War (reads):

"Were half the power that fills the world with
terror

Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and
courts,

Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts."

How did he think peace among nations
could come about?

P. If they were taught not to fight.

P. If more money was spent on education
than on war, it would redeem the human
mind from error—

P. I think he wrote the poem because he
was impressed with this arsenal and wanted
to tell the world what war was.

T. Yes, he could see far enough ahead to
know that people of today would read the
poem and think about it.

P. I think the way I take it that war will
depopulate the country.

T. Yes, I saw a poem the other day on
this same subject. It is in this month's
Board of Education Bulletin. Would you
like to hear it? (reads:)

THE ILLUSION OF WAR *

By Richard Le Gallienne

1

War

I abhor

And yet how sweet

The sound along the marching street

Of drum and fife; and I forget

Wet eyes of widows, and forget

Broken old mothers, and the whole

Dark butchery without a soul.

2

Without a soul, save this bright drink

Of heady music, sweet as death:

And e'en my peace abiding feet

Go marching with the marching street;

For yonder, yonder goes the fife

And what care I for human life?

3

The tears fill my astonished eyes

And my full heart is like to break

And yet 'tis all embannered lies,

A dream those little drummers make!

4

O, it is wickedness to clothe

Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks

Hidden in music, like a queen

That in a garden of glory walks,

Till good men love the thing they loathe.

5

Art, thou hast many infamies,

But not an infamy like this!

O, snap the fife and still the drum

And show the monster as she is!

*From "Silk Hat Soldiers," John Lane Company.

(Pupils listened with rapt attention).

T. What do you think of this last poem?

P. I think this poem explains the first one—makes it more clear.

P. It tells how war is covered up by the music.

T. What does

"Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen

That in a garden of glory walks," mean?

P. Enticing music.

T. What does the music do?

P. It carries you off—

T. What kind of music?

P. Music, "sweet as death"—

T. What else?

P. "heady music"—

T. Yes, it goes to the head like?

P. Wine.

T. What does the poem say war does to men?

P. Men love the thing they loathe.

P. I think that means they hate it, but when they get to fighting they forget.

T. Yes, they forget everything but butchery.

T. Let us see what the poet says at the end of the poem (reads):

"Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
And like a-bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say,
'Peace!'

"Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals

The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!

But beautiful as songs of the immortals,

The holy melodies of love arise."

P. He looks forward to the time when there will be no more wars.

T. Yes, Perhaps we ourselves can help bring that time nearer. The whole civilized world is trying now to think of a way to end wars. We will talk about this again.

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

1. Stimulation. (See introduction and first part of lesson.)

2. Presentation of poem as a whole.

3. Note that the larger meaning of the poem is never subordinated to details. Particular words are defined in relation to entire stanzas, and stanzas in relation to larger units in the poem.

4. Note that the spirit of the poem may be fully realized although certain words are not perfectly understood. To interrupt consideration of the poem by reference to the dictionary leads to concentration on unusual words rather than to emphasis on the larger thought of the poem. Words should be subordinated to the phrases in which they occur. The teacher might, for instance, have indicated briefly, in passing, the meaning of *teocallis*.

5. Observe that questions come largely from pupils.

6. Constant reference to the words of the poem and repetition of parts in the course of the discussion results in familiarity with its language.

7. Note that when a pupil struck the idea with the one word *friendly* the teacher instantly accepted the implied meaning and expressed it more completely.

8. Reference to influence on individual conduct will be more or less specific according to the nature of the poem. It may be well at times to trust to the poem itself.

FUN FOR THE CHILDREN

C. C. CERTAIN



When March Winds Blow.

From their dens come the giants when March winds blow.
With a howl they leave the mountains for the valleys below.
And the creatures of the forests, they hide in fear,
As the thundering tread of the giants comes near.

Along the fields, upon the hills, and out in the marsh
Can be heard their loud voices, angry and harsh.
Great trees bow down and groan and sway,
When they hear what the giants in anger say.

Hideous and ugly the giants stride past,
Wicked and evil, and furious and fast.
The birds of the forests rise swiftly on wing
To escape the destruction the giants would bring.

Is it a wonder that squirrels from slumber awake
And turn in their houses and tremble and shake?
That rabbits through brambles wildly go
With soft fur ruffled in the winds that blow?

It is a time of terror when the giants pass by
With heads in the clouds that darken the sky.
But the bluebirds, they mock them and sing without fear.
They taunt them and tell them that spring time is near.

A GOOSE

There was a goose with crooked neck,
That used her beak to pick and peck.

She waddled when she walked along,
As if some one had done her wrong.

When sunbeams on the roadway beat,
She said it was the summer heat.

Then when it came to windy weather,
She felt all ruffled, mind and feather.

At sun or cloud she cocked her eye,
Seemed greatly wronged, and wondered why.

HIS NAME'S GOODBYE

Yonder comes a traveling man, his name's Goodbye.
He's ever, ever traveling, please tell me why.

Where's he going to go? When's he coming back?

I wonder what's he carrying in that queer, old pack.

He may be going to ride; he may be going to walk.

I wonder what he says when he sits down to talk.

When Goodbye's about to start, when he's about to go,

Why everybody's kissing him, I'd truly like to know.

A SPELLING PROCEDURE WITH SOCIAL VALUES†

ALICE KELLEY

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To think of learning to spell in a social setting has meant thinking of spelling from a new angle.

Speaking precisely, "Spelling consists in forming correct and fixed associations between the successive letters of a word and between the word thus spelled and the meaning."

"What need in this mechanical process for a social procedure?" you may say.

On the other hand, are we not finding repeatedly that skills perfected under the usual class room conditions fail to function in real life situations? Why not, then, let the pupils learn to spell in situations more or less similar to those in which they will spell later on. We believe the requirement made by society, that knowledge gained in school should function in life, must be met in the teaching program.

Then, too, in life we find individuals forming into groups, with different initial abilities, different needs, and different capacities. These groups are flexible, constantly changing, owing to individual development. Experimental evidence shows the need for this flexible grouping in the spelling class. Pupils vary in ability to spell a given list of words. What happens? Joe and the other ninety percent spellers are held back in order to give the twenty-five percent spellers time to learn their words; or the twenty-five percent pupils are pushed faster than they can proceed in order that the ninety percent pupils may have words to study. This is neither making for economy of time nor the establishment of right habits of work. The situation demands a grouping of pupils in such a way that a constant change in the personnel of the group is possible. A well organized social procedure will provide for this.

And still, is the learning of a given list of words so that they can be spelled with the desired accuracy, and the provision for individual differences in spelling ability, all that we must care for in the twenty minutes daily spelling period? Society demands something more. That is made clear in the answers given recently by Chicago's biggest business men to this question, "What are the chief qualities boys and girls should cultivate in order to become successfully fit for the business world?" Men in high positions and representing such a broad range of industry as the Chicago and Pacific Railroad, the Industrial Relations Branch, the Western Electric Company, the Marshall Field Company and the Chicago Trust Company have replied:

"Cultivate and form the habit of trying to see the best side of your associates; avoid knocking and disparaging others," said one.

"Executives are in constant search for young people with ideas and ability to demonstrate their value," said another.

"What counts most is the way you go about whatever you take up," said Lucius Teter, president of the Chicago Trust Company.

Summarized the answers read; honesty, dependability, character, orderly mental habits, ambition and unlimited cooperation.

Since growth in character as well as the acquirement of knowledge is the work of the school, why should not the spelling class share in this responsibility? The spelling teacher may say, "If I am to look after the establishment of right habits and the setting up of ideals I shall never finish my word list." Dr. Kilpatrick and others tell us that many learnings go on at the same time. The teacher may be teaching words, the child is learning words, but while he is learning words he is building up the ideals

†Part I of a paper read before The National Council of Teachers of English, November 1923.

and attitudes he lives by. He becomes accurate or slovenly in his thinking, efficient or not in attacking his problems, courteous or discourteous in his dealings with others, honest or dishonest in doing his work. The qualities which society counts desirable, or their opposites are bound to form whether the teacher wills it or no. It is the conditions of learning, then, that are important. Generosity in thought and action, resourcefulness, good judgment, initiative, cooperation, and the like will develop in the degree to which activity in the spelling class as elsewhere provides for the exercise of these qualities.

We must, then, use in the classroom a social procedure as nearly similar as is feasible to natural life situations for:

1. Skills perfected under machine like conditions do not function when group conditions prevail.

2. The child is essentially a social being although he possesses individuality, mentally and emotionally: therefore provision must be made for individual differences and cooperative group activity.

3. Only when the child's actions are controlled by the same motives which should influence him in later life does he develop those habits of judgment, direction, control, and cooperation which will be of value as long as life endures.

A class room procedure based on these principles demands the practice of economy in choice and set up of material, for while emphasizing the social qualities, the teacher should at no time feel the pressure of an unfinished word list. To make sure pupils are learning the words they actually use, several creditable word lists were consulted and only such words, 1200 in all, as occurred with a high degree of frequency in five of the seven lists were selected for the required list for the first six grades. This approximates 50 words in the A First and 100 to 125 for each succeeding grade through the A Sixth. An equal number of words occurring at a less degree of frequency were chosen from the same sources and from lists submitted by the various departments of the

school, language, science, health, domestic art, manual training. These are known as the additional words. The required list is short enough to be covered by all pupils; the additional list provides a larger vocabulary for the better spellers.

The time of both teacher and pupil is further economized by the arrangement of material in lesson form and by provision for inventory tests. As a result, the classroom organization resolves itself into a number of flexible groups, in some one of which each pupil may be found working on the words which he does not know, and progressing from group to group very much at his own rate with other pupils of like ability.

The graphs shown below give evidence that control gained over words under these conditions transfers from one situation to another in the spelling class and to written work in other activities of the school.

Chart I



The change in spelling control shown here was made by a representative sixth-grade class over a group of thirty-five words and their derivatives in a period of six weeks. The heavy black line indicates the words misspelled by each pupil in a timed sentence inventory test. It was drawn immediately after the test and at once individualized the pupil and brought him to see himself in

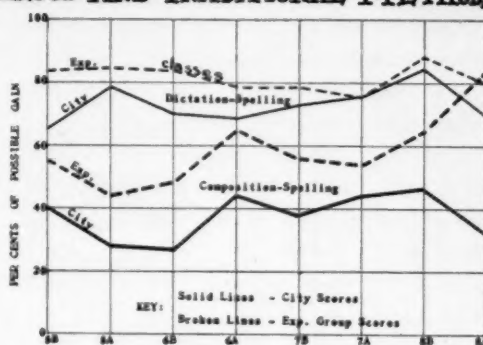
relation to the goal and to other members of the class. The wide range of ability on the inventory test is noticeable, the pupil E on the extreme left of the graph missing *no* words, while A, the one on the extreme right, missed 25 words, B-12, C-15, and D-8. The dotted line is a repetition of the same test. The light line shows the results when the same words and their derivatives were dictated in different combinations and new sentences. Three weeks elapsed between any two tests. It is understood, of course, that pupils who missed few words on the inventory progressed almost immediately to a study of new words and came back at the end of the three weeks for the required review. However, with an intelligent understanding of his difficulty, the sympathetic cooperation of his captain and the opportunity to progress at his own rate, each one of these weak pupils was able to show at the end of six weeks nearly the same degree of control as those who had been perfect in the beginning.

In order to secure a check on the degree to which this control transferred to other written work, compositions written in the language classes were checked for spelling and the spelling coefficient (number of errors per thousand running words) determined. Statistics show that in February A wrote 42 words of more than three letters, made 9 errors in spelling, and had a coefficient of 214. In May he wrote 63 words of more than three letters, and made only 6 errors, so that his coefficient was 95. He had gained 21 words in vocabulary, made one half the errors and gained 119 in coefficient, B gained 251 points, C, 139, and D, 126. The class medium for February was 58 on number of words of more than three letters, 3.8 in errors, 59.5 in coefficient. May shows a gain of 13.4 vocabulary, 1.3 errors, 27.5 in coefficient. The majority of pupils in different schools who have been set down as problems have shown a gain in this spelling control. A sixth-grade pupil made a gain of 208 which means that he is misspelling 208 fewer words per thousand than he did in

February. Another gained 425 and another 125.

Chart II

COMPARISON OF RESULTS GROUP AND TRADITIONAL METHODS



In Chart II the transfer is shown on a larger scale, but under conditions where the group organization was emphasized more strongly than individual progression. Two hundred and eight classes, approximately 7000 children, are doing the group work. The data are based on percents of possible gain, that is, the gain is computed by dividing the gain by the percent of possible gain. For example, initial score for a given class is 325 points; final score, 945 points; gain, 620; % possible gain, $620 \div 675$ or 90%.

The data show that in both the spelling from dictation and spelling in free composition the group gains exceeded the city. The transfer of spelling control is greater in the experimental group, for here the gains in composition spelling more nearly approximate the gains in dictation. This chart was constructed on the results of group work done in a number of classes for the past two years. The present plan affords better organization and a more flexible grouping, so that even better results are anticipated.

Testimony as to the development of desirable social qualities is furnished by statements taken from more than 100 teachers of spelling who experimented with the method in its various stages of development. The following are illustrative:

"At first the children resented having others help them. They have learned to work together and to have respect for one another's ideas."

"The group method develops initiative, leadership, greater tolerance and generosity for the rights of others. These are as important, I believe, as actual spelling results, especially with foreign children."

"At the beginning of the term pupils waited for directions, were stiff and afraid of each other. Now they go about planning out their own work, look things up for themselves and consult with each other in a business like manner. This is largely the result of the spelling plan."

"Pupils have learned the importance of being able to lead and to work under a leader," says one teacher of a fifth grade." "When I was absent last week the pupils were ready to take up division of fractions. The substitute suggested that she review, but the children said, 'Oh, no, we don't have to wait for Miss —. We know how to go ahead.' They chose a leader and all worked together in trying to learn how to divide fractions. More than 40 percent learned without a teacher. At the beginning of the semester this same class would have been 'at sea' without a teacher directing. I am in favor of this method for it *teaches the pupil to help himself*. He learns to accept and make use of the helpful comment given

him by others in the group and to give criticisms in like spirit."

Another teacher made a definite study of these social traits in some of her pupils. She said, "One boy showed no willingness to cooperate or to obey, showed no respect for leaders, would not abide by the decisions of the leaders or classmates, disregarded the rules of the spelling games, and prided himself on being slow to obey. Near the middle of the term he told me that he felt he was getting on better because he saw his own faults when it came his turn to act as leader. Leading wasn't as easy as he thought. Later he suggested that I let someone else take his turn for the help it might give another. He often seemed worried if all did not cooperate. On several occasions he quietly gave up his turn or other privileges to maintain a good spirit in the class."

These social qualities were developed and spelling control steadily increased under conditions in direct accordance with the principles set forth in the first part of this paper.

A detailed outline of these conditions including a description of the class room methods will be given in the April number of the *ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*. This article will contain cuts showing a pupil's book, study paper, test paper, record card, and pupils themselves at work in the various groups.



INTELLIGENCE AND PROBLEMS OF INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH

HARRY J. BAKER

Clinical Psychologist, Detroit Public Schools

It is unfortunate, in part, that the mention of intelligence immediately calls to mind such terms as "Binet," "I. Q." and "tests." This state of affairs has arisen from an undue emphasis upon the tools of mental testing rather than upon the results of measurement. No doubt the psychologist is at fault in stimulating idle curiosity. The present writer wishes to lay aside such procedure and to deal briefly with instruction in English in the light of knowledge about intelligence.

Intelligence is concerned with, and is a function of human communication. It can scarcely be considered or measured except in actions or thoughts transmitted to others. The close relationship which it bears to language and to English in our particular case is rather obvious. While the existence of such relationship is readily conceded, the interpretation of problems of instruction with respect to intelligence levels deserves careful study. Until common ground is discovered, teachers of English will miss a lesson in the problems of intelligence, and the psychologists will overlook their own opportunity to be of practical assistance in a very important field of instruction.

Elements common to both fields are to be found in the limited powers of expression by the feeble-minded, as contrasted with wealth of vocabulary found with superior minds. Even within the feeble-minded groups, oral communication among the lowest types, or idiots, is by means of simple sounds; among the middle types or imbeciles, by simple words; and among the higher types or morons, by simple sentences. The dull speak simply. On the other hand, the individual endowed with superior in-

tellect of the first order, unhampered by scanty association of ideas, by meager comprehension, or by paucity of vocabulary, finds ample expression for his subtler shades of meaning in a veritable array of figures of speech, abounding in synonyms and rich in well-chosen illustrations. Truly it may be said that a man's intellect may be judged by the language he speaks.

Specifically, the teacher of English in the elementary school has a difficult problem with respect to intelligence. She must first overcome her early tendency to deal with ten-year-old minds in terms of twenty-year-old explanations. Once she gets down to a more reasonable level she must still learn to vary that level constantly over a range of several years to meet the different levels of intelligence found in any homogeneous age group. Segregation of pupils on the basis of intelligence is a partial solution of the problem of pacing the instruction in English or in other subjects to the ability of the pupils. Considered from the standpoint of the individual pupil, differences in level of communication between teacher and pupil are highly inefficient. The dull pupil, hearing words he recognizes vaguely, draws a mantle of indifference about himself. At his side the bright pupil rebels at what he considers an insult to his intellectual dignity, and he resents, either secretly or openly, what he terms "baby" talk. It is safe to state that few teachers or other educators have such a keen sense of values that they know how to handle this problem, and the writer hastens to include himself in the majority.

For the pupil whose mind is below par, but not as low as the feeble-minded, vocabu-

lary should be limited to simple words. Ideas should be expressed in "words of one syllable." A tabulation of word difficulty, determined by experimental research and standardized according to age or to grade levels, would be of great value to those who formulate courses of study. Such lists have already been attempted with success in the early primary grades. Through a cooperative plan a comprehensive committee could carry this work through to a successful completion.

The problem of intelligence with respect to sentence structure has elements similar to that of vocabulary. The dull pupil has difficulty in following ideas expressed in any except simple phrases. He becomes concerned with words as isolated units, and does not grasp the larger meanings. His memory span may actually be too short to encompass a complex idea. If he actually succeeds in getting a hazy general impression, he lacks the readiness of associations to bring out the finer shades of meaning. Poor comprehension and limited powers of self-criticism shunt his sense of values into a state of placid indifference, which is frequently mistaken for pure obstinacy. If the teacher can wisely modify or simplify her own high standards of English and set as her goal something within the pupils' range of abilities, her effectiveness will be tremendously increased.

It has been shown that there is a close correlation between intelligence and word-knowledge or vocabulary. There is a correlation between intelligence and sentence meaning which is even more marked. The ability to write or to formulate logical composition has a very intimate relationship to intelligence. The more complex the mental process becomes, the more baffling it becomes to dull minds. This relationship in most instances is so striking that a brief composition from a set topic containing certain definitely specified words can be used effectively as an informal test of intelligence. The fact that a few pupils of average ability possess special talent for language does not invalidate the general

close relationship existing between composition and intelligence.

The more general aspects of English with respect to intelligence have been discussed. There remains for consideration certain "tool" subjects of English which will be treated briefly. They are handwriting, spelling, and reading.

From some quarters it has been suggested that there is no problem with respect to intelligence in the teaching of handwriting. In fact, certain investigations could be cited which seem to disprove completely the existence of any positive correlation. However, such reports may have been based upon the unfavorable conditions which have existed in handwriting instruction in the past. When subjected to psychological analysis there is little in the purely mechanical aspects of handwriting which appeals to the intellect. In fact, it is usually distasteful to pupils of superior ability, and particularly so when formal drill with repetition of subject matter is engaged in, continuously. However, the mechanical aspects make some appeal to the dull pupil, who finds it fitted to his ability. The problem therefore is not so much one of method as of content. Variation to suit the levels of intelligence should be in the direction of marked enrichment of subject matter for superior pupils. There should be recourse to repetition only when it is evident that interest in subject matter is detrimental to rate or to quality of writing. Mild emphasis only is the best policy for repetition for pupils of superior intelligence. It should not be inferred conversely that the dull pupil should have the mechanical aspects only, for he, too, is worthy of any improvements which may be discovered. To a marked extent, however, he needs drill upon the mechanical aspects of handwriting. He is apt to be slow and uncertain in muscular control, poor in observation of models, and lacking in power of self-criticism. He gets "b" and "d" interchanged and leaves them that way, whereas a bright pupil would soon discover his own mistake in such a situa-

tion. It is unnecessary to carry the discussion further to show that levels of intelligence enter into instruction in handwriting.

Spelling in the English language is probably a more involved mental process than in most other languages. Lack of rules or universal exceptions to rules is the general rule. There is little hope for the backward in such a situation. Instruction in building up associations to fix certain difficult words merely adds to the confusion. Instruction in spelling for pupils of inferior intelligence should be marked by minimum lists of words and by enrichment in rote drill upon these words. The superior child profits from enrichment in content and from clever memoriter devices. Later in life he will stand in need of a much wider range of words than will the backward pupil. The writer recalls a few cases of superior adult intelligence whose claim of being poor spellers was founded on a few catch words, but whose general achievement in spelling was good. Such cases should not be cited to prove that there is no relationship between intelligence and spelling.

There are two aspects of reading to be considered with respect to intelligence. The first deals with the mechanics of elementary reading, the second with reading for comprehension by the mature reader. In its early stages, skill in reading results from the development of a series of highly specialized factors, such as eye span. Factors of this character have only a fair correlation with intelligence. Pupils make uneven progress in reading as stress is

placed upon the various special factors involved. Such practices lead to low correlations with intelligence.

In the second stage of reading, in which mechanics are dropped with increased attention upon content, the correlation reappears. Reading at this stage involves complex mental processes. From the fact that large numbers of dull pupils fail for several semesters to make any perceptible progress in learning to read, it is evident that the psychological processes involved are not generally known and practiced. Segregation of dull pupils under one teacher has forced a study of this problem as never before.

Limitations of space and of the writer's knowledge do not permit him to consider fully the relationship between intelligence and the higher aspects of English. It may be stated somewhat dogmatically that appreciation of finer shades of word meaning or of qualifying illustrations rests upon ability to master the abstract. In due course of time we will have established safety lines which will prevent the less capable mentally from being dragged beyond their depths.

In summary, it should be repeated that analysis of problems of instruction growing out of knowledge of intelligence levels is of greater importance than the method or technic of intelligence tests. This discussion has attempted to hint at some of the more obvious problems of instruction with respect to intelligence. If questions have been raised rather than answered, the writer's purpose will have been realized.



EDITORIALS

The Elementary English Review

A new magazine to fill a long felt need in a field not previously served by professional journals. The Review is published monthly from September to June in the interest of teachers of English in the elementary schools. It is sponsored by the following board of advisers:

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7. Professional news items, reports of meetings, announcements of programs, activities of educational organizations, summer school courses, itineraries for vacation trips, classroom experiments and courses of study in process of development.

The following articles are representative:

FORTHCOMING ARTICLES

The Teaching of Poetry in the Grades—Rollo Lyman, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

Essentials of Language in the Elementary Schools—W. F. Tidyman, State Normal School, Fairmont, West Virginia.

Diagnosis of Spelling Difficulties, Grade VII-A—Ina H. Hill, Flint, Michigan.

Class Work in Constructive Criticism of Composition—Frances Jenkins, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Building the Sentence Sense—Howard R. Driggs, New York University, New York City.

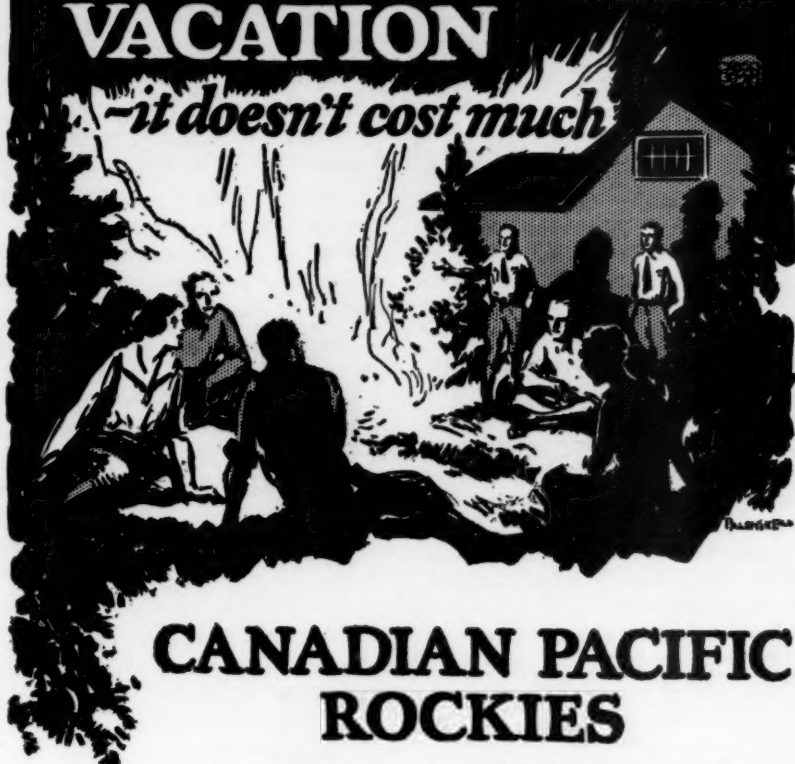
Teaching Economy in the Use of the Dictionary—Charles S. Pendleton, Nashville, Tenn.

Stage Sets for Elementary School Auditoriums, Part II—George Styles, Detroit, Michigan.

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I

ILLUSTRATING COMPOSITIONS

Illustrating one another's compositions is an activity which always proves interesting to children. It is an exercise which has a double value in that it furnishes a motive for clear writing as well as careful reading.

Such a lesson may be carried on in this way: After writing original experiences or riddles in the language period pupils exchange papers. Each one reads the story he receives and then draws a picture representing each idea in the composition which can be illustrated. The papers are then returned to their authors, each one of whom checks up on the comprehension of the one who read his story, giving him a score of 1 for each idea which he correctly represented.

For example one boy wrote this story:

"My father gave me a pumpkin. I cut eyes, nose, and mouth in it. Then I put it in the window."

One child who illustrated the story drew a picture of a pumpkin in a window. He had eyes, nose and mouth marked upon it. The child who wrote the story gave him a score of 5, because he had represented the five ideas which could be pictured, viz.; pumpkin, window, eyes, nose and mouth.

II

MAKING "SILENT READERS"

Two classes may make "Silent Readers" for each other. In this activity each child prepares a little booklet containing pictures in which some part is lacking, together with directions for completing these pictures.

For instance, at the top of one page in his "Silent Reader," a child pasted an attractively colored butterfly which he had cut from a magazine. At the bottom of the page appeared these directions which he had composed:

"This butterfly is in a flower garden. He is sipping honey from a big red flower. Draw the flower for him to sit upon."

Upon another page appeared a picture of a little girl with upraised hand and with a bowl before her. The directions underneath the picture read to this effect:

"This little girl is hungry. There is porridge in her bowl. Draw a spoon in her hand so she can eat it."

Each child is responsible for one booklet. He collects all of his own pictures, writes his compositions, and designs and makes his book cover.

When the books are done the two classes (or pupils

within the same class) exchange books and each pupil carries out the directions for completing the pictures in the book which he receives.

The completed book may be handed back to its author for corrections in each case, or it may be corrected by any other member of the class. After the corrections are made, however, the one who did the drawing should be permitted to keep the book he has completed.

III

MATCHING PICTURES AND STORIES

Matching stories with their appropriate pictures is a type of silent reading which can be used to advantage in all grades.

In the first grade a Mother Goose rhyme or short story may be given to each child and the appropriate picture for each selection placed upon the chalk ledge. For instance, if a child has the rhyme of "Little Boy Blue," a picture of Little Boy Blue should be placed upon the chalk ledge. Each pupil reads his story silently, then selects from the collection of pictures, the one which corresponds to his selection. He then shows the picture to the class while he reads the story to them that they may decide whether or not he has chosen the right picture.

These stories and pictures may be clipped from discarded readers or the pictures collected from other sources and the stories prepared by the teacher.

In the more advanced grades, the children may carry out the same idea, using materials prepared by the pupils themselves. They may clip stories and their corresponding sets of pictures from magazines, mounting the pictures in groups upon pieces of cardboard which may be placed upon the chalk ledge.

Sometimes they enjoy collecting attractive pictures from various sources, and writing their own stories about them. In either case, it is well to let two grades prepare material simultaneously and exchange their stories and pictures so that the content for the silent reading lessons may be entirely new to the children who are using it for that purpose.

By passing out different stories to the same individual, the one set of material may be used upon several occasions.

IV

FILLING BLANKS WITH PICTURES

The stories which often appear in Sunday papers or magazines, in which many words are omitted and pictures inserted in their places, can be utilized for

interesting silent reading lessons.

The teacher and children collect enough different stories of this type to supply at least one half of the class, thus providing for several lessons, each pupil having a different story each time. The teacher copies these stories on pieces of cardboard leaving a blank space where each picture occurs. The list of words represented by all the pictures is placed (out of order) to the right of the story as an aid to the pupil whose puzzle it is to see if he can draw the appropriate picture in each blank.

At the end of the period papers are exchanged and the original stories passed out for pupil's use in checking up on each other's work.

In case the teacher is only able to secure one story of this type at a time, she may write it on the blackboard the same way as suggested for the cards. After the children have copied it and drawn in their pictures, the teacher may read the complete story orally, the children checking up their results as she goes along.

V

SOLVING "YES" AND "NO" PROBLEMS

Playing a game of racing to see which half of the class can correctly answer the most "yes" and "no" problems within a given time is an activity greatly enjoyed by the children. It also provides excellent practice for pupils having difficulty with their concrete work in arithmetic.

Material for this game is prepared by writing upon squares of cardboard, different sets of mental arithmetic problems which can be answered with "Yes" or "No."

Examples of such problems are as follows:

"Mary received \$10 for Christmas. She spent \$7 for a pair of skates. Could she buy a doll which cost \$3.50 with what was left?"

"Jack and two other boys went into a store together. They saw a sign which read 'Ice Cream Cones 5c. Jack had 14c. Could he buy enough cones for all three children?"

An answer card should be prepared for each set of problems, the answer card and the problem card being numbered with a corresponding figure. Each child should be provided with a problem card. The answer cards should be left upon the teacher's desk. In playing the game each child writes upon a piece of paper a list of numbers corresponding to the numbers of the problems on his card. Opposite each number he writes "Yes" or "No" according to his solution of the problem. After answering a complete set of problems, he may get the corresponding answer card from the teacher's desk, correct his results, and begin work upon another set. In this way each pupil is permitted to solve as many sets of problems as he is able to do within the given time.

At the end of the period, the number of cards correctly answered by each individual is ascertained, and the total for each half of the room is found. The half of the class having the highest total score is declared the winning side.

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CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

A Composition Lesson

GRADE VI-A

I. OBSERVATIONS BY ELIZABETH E. BOWLES

A socialized procedure was followed.

By means of an initial test in composition, the pupils discovered their defects and determined on an English drive to overcome their errors in order to measure up to the standard required for their grade.

They planned to make a scrap book, which would contain stories, illustrated by pictures cut from magazines. They desired to make a book which they would feel proud to place in the library of the Wingert School. Their project was being systematically carried out.

Two children were called upon to take charge of the lesson, Alice to act as chairman, and Delmar to keep score.

A pupil explained that the class was conducting a contest to see which one of the two teams, into which it had been divided, would win in scoring the larger number of points on the outlines of their stories.

Alice called the class to order and asked who was ready to read his outline. As each pupil was called upon, he stepped to the front of the room, showed his picture, and read the outline of a story based upon it. After the outline had been read, criticisms were called for.

Most of the pupils were genuinely interested in helping each other to make the best possible outlines, and seemed to feel their responsibility for making a success of the work. The teacher sat at the side of the room, ready to offer assistance when it was needed, or a word of encouragement when a pupil showed improvement.

The criticisms were given in a courteous manner, always for the purpose of improving the outline, according to the pupils' best judgment. The pupils received the criticisms gratefully, and in a few cases politely defended their own work. The spirit of the class was excellent.

After he had read his outline, each pupil called for an appraisal of his work by his classmates. In each case some one pupil placed upon it a tentative value expressed in percent, accompanied by his reason for the mark. The class was then asked to act upon the suggestion by voting. If the majority were in favor, the mark was assigned to the pupil's work.

A splendid spirit of cooperation was manifested, not only in the mutual helpfulness shown by the pupils in securing outlines for interesting stories, but also in the case of one boy who asked his teacher's help in punctuating his story. As the teacher had not had time to grant the request, she asked the class how assistance

could be given him. The little class leader volunteered to come early to help him. It was further suggested that she might ask another pupil or two to help. This arrangement seemed satisfactory to all concerned.

In each case before a pupil took his seat, he was helped by his teacher to formulate what he had learned through the criticisms of his classmates, and to state his formulations so that he was able to profit by the experience.

I believe that this teacher was not only helping her pupils to improve their English, but that she was also indirectly teaching them many desirable traits, and that the attitude of the pupils toward their work, their teacher and their school, and toward life itself was being lifted to a higher plane.

II. OBSERVATIONS BY CLARA HORINE

The teacher called upon the two leaders of competing groups, Alice and Delmar, to take charge of the class. Alice acted as chairman, Delmar as secretary.

One child was called upon to explain the project. Each pupil was making a story book to be given to the Wingert School library. Each had brought a picture and was writing a story suggested by the picture. All were helping with criticisms and suggestions. The project included also a contest between two groups. Pupil's work was rated from day to day by vote of the majority and the scores recorded to the credit of the group to which the particular pupil belonged.

The work on this day consisted of class criticism and judgment of story outlines submitted by pupils who declared themselves ready. Evidently the class had previously worked out a standard plan for the story, for each pupil's outline was criticized as conforming or not conforming to this plan:

Opening sentence: Who? when? where?

Air of mystery.

Events leading to a climax.

Conclusion.

After reading her outline, the pupil called for suggestions.

There was throughout a fine spirit of good will and cooperation. I was specially pleased when Alice, leader of one group, volunteered to help her rival, Delmar, with his punctuation which was causing trouble.

Pupils took criticism well, though some maintained their points against opposition, until convinced.

There was no undue prominence of the leaders.

The teacher spoke often, but usually to confirm a judgment, or praise a pupil who had improved.



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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

ROOTABAGA STORIES AND ROOTABAGA PIGEONS. By Carl Sandburg. New York City: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

To the mother who reads to young children, Carl Sandburg's "Rootabaga Stories" and "Rootabaga Pigeons" will bring great joy. They are especially welcome to one who dislikes reading aloud the ordinary books for children. Here is a real contribution to children's literature and the best part of it is that the mother will have as much fun out of the stories as the youngsters.

The subject matter is new. Instead of the elves, gnomes, and leprechauns of European folk lore we have the winds, the sky, and the cornfields, inhabited by quaint creatures, the corn fairies, the zizzies, and the flummywisters.

One need not be told that Mr. Sandburg has three little daughters to know that he understands children. He never "talks down" to them. Some of the words they don't understand, but they respond instantly to the magic of his queer nonsense.

There is much repetition of words, phrases, and sentences, a device greatly enjoyed by children. Fantastic names crowd the pages. What child could forget "The Potato Face Blind Man" or "The Village of Cream Puffs"? In these stories, as in his poems, he uses Indian names arranged alliteratively or those with a marked rhythm; such as, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Chattahoochee or Oskaloosa, Iowa, Walla Walla, Washington.

The prose is very musical, as this sentence will illustrate: "In the night when a mist crept up the streets and threw a purple and gray wrapper over everything, in the night when the stars and the sky shook out sheets of purple and gray mist down over the town, then the sky scrapers leaned toward each other and whispered."

Read as Mr. Sandburg reads his poems, smoothly, in a sing-song manner, they bring into a small child's eyes a shining light of appreciation, which is the best compliment for these imaginative, whimsical tales.

Credit is due the Petershams, the illustrators, for they have perfectly caught the spirit of the stories in their delightful drawings.

CLARISSA MURDOCH (MRS. GEORGE W.)

THE STORY OF DR. DOLITTLE. By Hugh Lofting. With Introduction by Hugh Walpole. New York City: Frederick A. Stokes, 1920.

Just what constitutes the charm of "The Story of

Dr. Dolittle"? One hesitates about analyzing a thing so perfect, yet one cannot help puzzling about it. Quaint phrases, unique characters, grotesque situations, exquisite poetry, sound philosophy, keen insight and understanding—all these we find and much besides in these word and pen pictures of Hugh Lofting, the artist, whose original sketches are as indescribably funny and illuminating as his charming text.

Queerest of all queer households, indeed, is that of Doctor Dolittle in Puddleby-in-the-Marsh, with all the animals sharing the responsibility of running so unusual an establishment and succeeding in making their beloved doctor happier than he had dreamed of being under the well-intentioned regime of sister Sarah. Here Polynesia, the parrot, reigns supreme—she whose wisdom made the doctor realize the importance of learning the language of birds and animals that he might be clever enough to care for them instead of "silly people."

And what a world of remarkable adventures has this same pudgy little doctor, always conspicuous because of his high hat, his note book, and medicine kit, and above all, his never-failing patience and kindness. What a deal of suspense there is when the doctor's ship on its way to aid the suffering monkeys "runs into Africa"; what suspense when he of the snuffbox fame is rescued by Jipp, "the cleverest little dog in the world" and an expert in "long distance smelling." Among many exciting adventures, we learn how the king of the beasts was made to humble himself and do the little doctor's bidding; how the King of Jolliginki became so enraged that he threw his tooth brush at the palace cat; how the monkeys rewarded their faithful doctor by giving him the rarest of all rare beasts, the pushmi-pullyu; how a black prince of a dreamy frame of mind was made white that he might marry his dream princess; and how the doctor became master of a pirate ship and made his rival, the pirate chief, suffer the ignominious fate of growing bird seed for canaries.

It is no mere accident that Hugh Walpole wrote the delightful introduction to this fascinating little book—he whose "Jeremy" made us realize that he is one of those precious and rare souls who knows children well enough to write about them and for them. And just such another rare soul is Hugh Lofting, who has made Doctor Dolittle live for us.

MONICA EVANS.

Detroit, Michigan.

LUTHER BURBANK AND HIS PLANT SCHOOL. By Slusser, Williams, and Beeson. New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.

The dedication, "To Luther Burbank, Lover of Plants and Lover of Children," commends itself to the appreciative reader. So, too, does the charming introduction written by Luther Burbank, himself, who so fully realized that when one learns "to love and cherish and cultivate the best tendencies in plants and children, the undesirable ones will fade from neglect and lack of encouragement."

Here one becomes fascinated in learning how all growing things had the opportunity to find new life, new vigor, new beauty in the wonderful plant school where Luther Burbank, alone, could reign as a master whose great responsibility was, to use his own words, "not only to train good into his plants but to train out the bad."

"Lover of animals" the dedication might have read, also, for "Jumbo," a most unusual little dog, was only one of Burbank's animal friends who, after the fashion of a real "pal," was as careful of the plants and flowers as Burbank, himself, and reserved his otherwise wild antics for the open fields rather than the garden.

"A genius who has great faith"—that is Luther Burbank as he is described through his great work in this attractive little book. It makes its first appeal to nature lovers, but it is broad enough and fine enough to win a world of other readers.

MONICA EVANS.

THE VOYAGES OF DOCTOR DOLITTLE. By Hugh Lofting. New York City: Frederick A. Stokes, 1922.

In this volume, Stubbins, a much-to-be-envied youth of Puddleby-in-the-Marsh, finds a place for himself in the doctor's home, and by taking counsel with Polynesia, the parrot, earns the privilege of becoming the doctor's assistant and comrade on the rarest of all rare voyages to a floating island. It takes a small boy to appreciate the doctor, the most natural of all naturalists, and Stubbins, being a very real small boy, records one thrill after another with his characteristic enthusiasm and vim. Making a dog chief witness in a trial, fighting a most unusual bull fight that bull fights may end, meeting with Long Arrow, struggling with the language of shell fish, allowing himself to be crowned King Jong Thinkalot by savages whom he has befriended, and being rescued from this unhappy plight by the aid of a marvelous sea serpent and Polynesia's cunning—all these adventures of Doctor Dolittle are duly chronicled by Stubbins. More ships, more stowaways, more pictures, more everything—that is what this second book relates about our little doctor. Perhaps the fidgit's story is the best, but to tell it would spoil it all. And like most children's stories this one ends just without any frills or explanations—just a joyful home coming to Puddleby-in the Marsh.

MONICA EVANS.

From the Periodicals

LEWIS CARROLL—"Tell us a story," begged the three children.

"And I hope," said little Alice, "that there'll be nonsense in it."

And so Lewis Carroll began making the story of Alice in Wonderland for his three little friends. The account of his life is told so cleverly that children will not only enjoy but will remember the life of this famous author.—Margaret Ford Allen, *Child Life*, III (March, 1924), 147-49.

FLORENCE DAMON CLEARY.

THE KING AND AN OUTLAW—The story of King Saul and David told so simply that a child can understand and enjoy it,—and, what is most important in a Bible story, the beauty and simplicity of the Bible language is not lost.—Hazel Straight Stafford, *Junior Home Magazine*, V (February, 1924), 23.

F. D. C.

THE MAN WHO PAINTED CHILDREN—The story of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the little friends whom he painted. A child, after reading the biography, would have an intimate and kindly acquaintance with this famous English painter.—Minnie Olcott Williams, *Child Life*, III (February, 1924) 95-97.

F. D. C.

DETERMINING A LANGUAGE PROGRAM—This is a report upon investigations carried out to determine

features that should be emphasized to improve the teaching of English. It contains tabulations of returns on questionnaires: I—Language Skills Necessary for Ordinary Success in Life. II—Most Urgent Things Needed to Improve the Teaching of English. The article should be read by everyone interested in the problem of improving instruction in the English classroom.—J. W. Searson, *The English Journal*, XIII (February, 1924), 99-114.

C. C. C.

WHAT IS MEASURED BY INTELLIGENCE TESTS?—Discussion of an experiment to determine what effects modified teaching may have upon intelligence test scores. Results seem to indicate the term "intelligent test" is misleading since factors other than native intelligence influence the intelligence test scores.—Omen Bishop, *State University of Iowa*,—*Journal of Educational Research*, IX (January, 1924), 29-38.

C. C. C.

THE SPIRIT OF MODERN AMERICAN POETRY.—Three features that are most prominent, vigor, vividness, variety. Whitman's influence. All America singing: George Sterling—Far West; John Crowe Ransom—South; Edgar Lee Masters—Mid-West; William Ellery Leonard—Northwest; Robert Frost—East.—Louis Untermeyer, *The English Journal*, XIII (February, 1924), 89-99.

C. C. C.

SHOP TALK

Greetings and good wishes have been received from Mr. H. Y. Moffett, Editor of the Tri-State English Notes. Mr. Moffett has volunteered to come to the support of the REVIEW as a "very worthy venture."

Mr. Orton Lowe, Director of English, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, writes: "There is a large field for this journal, and it will be a very constructive thing for the elementary teacher. In my judgment it is the most promising field that has, up to this time, been untouched by professional journals."

Miss Mary A. S. Mugan, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Fall River, Massachusetts, writes that there is a real opportunity for a journal for the teachers in the elementary schools which will present the practical application in English teaching of modern educational theory.

Mr. Sterling A. Leonard of the University of Wisconsin in a recent letter comments with considerable enthusiasm upon a meeting to be held this month of the Committee of Grade School and High School Teachers of English of the Wisconsin State Association. The committee will sift some material of "extraordinary value" prepared by grade school teachers in an effort to make out a minimum course for grade-school English. Through the generosity of Mr. Leonard, THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW will later publish this "minimum" course for elementary schools.

Miss Bessie B. Goodrich and Miss Kate Kelley of the department of supervision of the Des Moines Public Schools are just completing some interesting studies on the departmental teaching of English. They have also been developing a new course of study in Des Moines. It is hoped that they will prepare a

report for the REVIEW discussing the results of their work.

Through a letter from Miss Theda Gildemeister comes an interesting side-light upon recent work by Miss Frances M. Smith, supervising "critic" of the Winona State Teachers College, Winona, Minnesota. Reading, vocabulary growth, language work, spelling, and writing were featured to a remarkable extent in a children-made play about Ulysses, according to Miss Gildemeister's report. The children also put on a puppet show, the puppets being vegetables (made of wood or painted) presumably from the children's gardens. The puppets told of their trials and tribulations, their joys and growth. The secret of Miss Smith's success seems to be her power to get the *children to do* everything. There was an excellent "Book" play given by her children recently, to incite more home reading; a superior rendition of "Hansel and Gretel," and a fine reading by the children of Achilles' story.

An important gathering of The Committee on Essentials of the National Council of Teachers of English, under the leadership of the chairman, Mr. S. A. Leonard, was held in Chicago during the meeting of the National Department of Superintendents. Present at the gathering were, Mr. Leonard, Miss Sophia Camenish of the Chicago Normal College, Miss Essie Chamberlain of the Oak Park School, Chicago, Mr. W. W. Hatfield, Secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English, and Mr. C. C. Certain of Detroit. The discussion was upon a comprehensive outline including "Courses of Study," "Text Books," "Motivation by Projects versus Mechanical Procedures," "Silent Reading," "Composition Mechanics," "Essentials of Literature," and "Some Possible Contributions of Parallel Tests and Scales." Special subcommittees are organizing for work in each of these fields with specific attention to the problem of *essentials*.

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